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# BETTER PLANTS

God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden



VOLUME II

FEBRUARY—MARCH, 1924

NUMBER 1



A Coldframe is a necessity if early flowers and vegetables are wanted. A few long boards, two or three sash with unbroken glass, a handy man with saw and hammer just about cover the equipment you will need

## Getting Plants Ready for Spring

*"In the dark soil and the silence of the seeds  
The robe of Spring is weaved."*

Nature is a magician. Every plant, animal and all organisms are built up by the mysterious power of the spirit of life. Thus in the springtime do we see earth's awakening, and the host of nature's flower children start marching over the land.

As the days begin to lengthen, indoor plants seem to take a fresh start, begin to grow and flower vigorously; also as the spring advances and more light and sunshine prevail, plants soon begin to show the stimulus by rapid growth. It is necessary, therefore, to examine all plants that are growing vigorously, and when deemed necessary, shift into larger sized pots as required. They must not be allowed to suffer for water or moisture, and will always show the benefit of being well syringed or watered overhead. On clear days air should be admitted freely to all plants, carefully avoiding cold draughts.

### Fighting the Foes of Plants

House plants kept warm and moist nourish their enemies into an early growth.

Thus we see some of our favorites growing yellow and hanging their heads. If we have good eyes or a strong lens, we shall soon discover that the trouble is "red spider," which is not as large as the head of the tiniest pin, but with a great appetite for leaves which he riddles, nips and kills in spite of his tiny dimensions.

On another plant we may find that an amazing colony of aphids has settled down. These look like helpless mites, not much larger than a poppy seed, sometimes black, sometimes green like the leaves they live on. Unless we can get rid of the aphids, we shall soon lose our plants.

Tobacco or nicotine extracts are placed first in the list for eliminating these pests, because they are the most effective. Those having the highest percentage of nicotine are the most valuable. Tobacco extracts can be had in both liquid and powder form and should be sprayed upon the plants out of doors, according to the instructions for the use of the kind preferred.

In greenhouses or conservatories plants may be fumigated by tobacco solutions, or by burning tobacco dust. By this method the nicotine is more thoroughly

applied than by spraying. Nicotine solutions are effective against plant lice or aphids, thrips, or any other soft bodied bugs.

Red spider may be eliminated by spraying with water, using force; or when possible, submerging the plants for short intervals. No insecticide is necessary if spraying is done.

Insects of all varieties must, of course be kept down. Manure waterings, at not too frequent intervals, will be advantageous to all plants likely to get pot-bound. House plants should be kept as near to the glass as convenient and should be turned round frequently to prevent them from becoming one sided. Hydrangeas and other plants of this type that are in tubs and were kept dormant all winter, should have some of the old top soil removed and be given a liberal top-dressing of rich compost, or repotted and started to grow for summer use.

### Sowing Seeds Indoors

One of the most natural ways of increasing plants is by seed, and whenever it is practicable to do so it is preferable to all others. In our own experience, any



Flat Ready for Sowing Seed

plant of which we can procure the seed we rarely increase in any other way; unless, of course, in cases where particular varieties are wanted that we know will not reproduce themselves from seed, so as to be certain of color and form. In all cases where seed taken from a variety or species will reproduce itself exactly, or in cases where a general variety is wanted, the propagation by seed is practiced.

In order that seeds shall germinate they must be supplied with moisture and be given a definite temperature. The requisite temperature and moisture vary with the different kinds of seeds, and are mostly determined by experience. Seeds may be sown in any medium which supplies these conditions, although when seeds are ordinarily sown in the ground such practice is not necessary to germination. They may be sown in fiber, moss or other like mediums. However, the ground furnishes the requisites for germination and also supplies food for the young plantlets when they begin to shift for themselves.

The depth at which seeds shall be sown depends on many conditions. A depth equal to twice the diameter of the seed is an old gardener's rule. This applies well to the sowing of most seeds under glass, when the soil is well prepared and is kept watered, but in the open ground three or four times that depth is usually necessary. Flower seeds sown in boxes indoors during February and transplanted into shallow boxes of good soil may be kept growing until early spring, when they are large enough to plant in the open border.—ROBERTS PEIRCE, *Propagating Superintendent*.

### THE "G. M.'S." REPORT

The open winter that we have enjoyed so far has enabled us to complete our fall work and to do much in preparation for the spring rush.

During September a large new planting of irises was made, including all the varieties that we consider worth while. These will be allowed to grow two years before digging. We shall fill our spring and fall iris orders from another block which was planted two years ago.

A large peony block of several acres was also transplanted. As these were planted in a recently acquired farm field of limestone soil, we anticipate splendid results.

It is our policy to make a peony and

iris planting, including all varieties, every fall. In this way we have a fresh field of two-year-old plants to dig from each year.

During the summer, and when in bloom, our perennial fields were carefully gone over. Any plants found not true to name were taken out, put in their proper place, or destroyed. Our two-year-old block of perennials was also dug this fall. About half of each variety was sent to the greenhouse to be potted; this will enable us to fill safely any late spring orders. The remainder were carefully put in frames with a light winter protection.

The chrysanthemum field was personally gone over by Mr. Farr last November. Several varieties were eliminated because we felt that they were inferior, or bloomed too late to give the best satisfaction. Thousands of these are now being potted for spring sales.

During the winter we have started over 150,000 cuttings in the greenhouse. A large crop of perennial seedlings is ready to be pricked off, and will be followed by another sowing outdoors in the early spring.

As far as possible we collect these perennial seeds from our own fields. In this way we are gradually improving our strains and get much better germinating results. For example, our Wyomissing Hybrid Delphiniums and Mrs. Scott Elliott Aquilegias were carefully gone over when in bloom. On each plant that produced an exceptionally nice flower a wire label was placed telling the color and qualities. Seed was collected only from the plants so labeled. This operation each year has produced remarkable results, but we are still trying to improve.

Winter spraying, so necessary to a clean nursery, has been completed. All our hybrid lilacs and other shrubs susceptible to scale are sprayed twice a year. A strong lime-sulphur solution is used for the winter spray. The second week in June a spray of nicotine and whale oil soap is applied. A power sprayer makes quick work of this operation.

In addition to the usual fall work we were able to plant out several thousand rooted shrub cuttings. This accomplishment will enable us to give better service in filling our orders next spring.—L. W. NEEDHAM, *General Manager*.

### BETTER PLANTS

#### Is It Interesting?

#### Is It Helpful?

If your answer is "yes," we have achieved our purpose. If your answer is "no," let us hear from you.

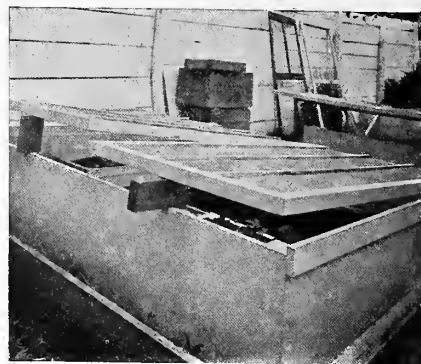
During the winter of 1921-22 we first formulated the idea of maintaining a periodical contact with our customers, present and prospective. The result was the issuance of eight numbers of BETTER PLANTS during 1923. From our viewpoint the idea has proven sound and practical. We are planning to continue the publication of BETTER PLANTS as a natural part of our routine.

#### DURING 1923—

"Better Plants" featured the following:

February issue—"Pruning and Spraying."

March issue—"Delphiniums for American Gardens."



Ventilating the Coldframe or Hotbed

April issue—"Golden Lilies from May to September."

May-June issue—"Snapshots from the Peony Field."

July-August issue—"Iris through the Eyes of the Office."

September issue—"Lilacs—The Flowers That Washington Loved."

October issue—"Great Stone Face in the Garden."

November-December issue—"Protecting Plants for Winter."

Back numbers are available for the asking, while they last.

#### FOR 1924—

We plan to present articles from the pens of well known horticultural writers. Negotiations are under way and there are delightful treats and surprises in store for American gardeners.

If you do not like everything that may appear in BETTER PLANTS, remember this story about the man, the boy, and the donkey.

"There once lived a poor man in a country district. Through force of circumstances, he was obliged to dispose of his donkey. The market was in the city and together with his son and the donkey, he traversed in that direction.

First, they led the donkey and some people laughed at them for being so foolish as to walk. Second, he placed the boy on the donkey's back and people condemned the boy for making his father walk. Third, he changed places and people condemned him for making the boy walk. Fourth, they both sat on the donkey's back, and the people condemned them for being cruel to the poor donkey. Fifth, they trussed the donkey on a pole and carried him between their shoulders, and everybody said they were crazy."

BETTER PLANTS must serve and please 20,000 readers. We can not hope to have it do so in all cases, but we are doing our best to have it please most of the readers most of the time.—THE EDITOR.

### MELROSINE KILLS ROSE BUGS

Get ready now to wipe out the striped rose bug and other insects. Melrosine will do it, and is guaranteed effective when used according to directions. A trial size enough for a gallon of solution, sent postpaid for 60 cents.

Standard quantities at the following prices: Pt. \$1; qt. \$1.75; ½ gal. \$3.25; gal. \$6. By express, at purchaser's expense.



A Coming Expert in Iris Culture  
Mrs. Stuhlsatz's Little Daughter

### GARDEN FACTS

Make this a perennial year. Plant for permanence, and increased value if you want it.

Chrysanthemums should be planted in spring only. Fall planting is usually unsuccessful. Order now for spring planting and for bloom this fall.

Each plant, as we watch and care for it, acquires its own particular history. About many a spot or plant tender memories of those we love are gathered.

Do not order poppies for spring planting. Poppies should be transplanted only in fall. They resent moving in spring; failure is almost certain to be the outcome.

One side of your home is yours. The other side is your gift to your neighbors, who not only can, but must, view it daily. Be sure that this gift worthily expresses your true taste and personality.

Army worms infesting the lawn grass may be destroyed by spraying the lawn with arsenate of lead until it is white. Arsenate of lead is prepared by using three pounds of the powder to fifty gallons of water, maintaining the same proportions if less quantity is needed.

If you should ever care to save a choice hardy bloomer from a prematurely warm spell which is likely to be followed by frosts, it can be done. Pack about 15 cents worth of ice around the base of the plant until the warm spell is over and thereby keep the roots dormant.

To destroy angleworms in the lawn—they are often serious pests—make a stock solution in the following manner: Dissolve one pound of salt in two gallons of boiling water; then add one pound of corrosive sublimate; the whole is then diluted with four gallons of water. One pint of this solution is used to sixteen gallons of water and sprayed over the lawn.

Do not plant Blue Spruce unless you have the room for a large tree. It is true that it is slow-growing in the earlier years, but in its native habitat it reaches a height of 150 feet. As it grows in size and age, the lower branches wither and become straggly. At first it has wonderful possibilities, but one should not look upon it as a permanent proposition unless there is plenty of room for it.

Have you been wondering why plants on the south side of the house winter-killed when similar ones on the other side of the house did not. The explanation is found in the fact that the warmer location causes the sap to start on warm days. Then when freezing temperature returns at nightfall, the plants are killed or a section in the canes killed out, which

causes the whole growth to die—just as if it had been cut off.

Do not remove the mulch until danger of late spring frosts is past. These days of early thaws may play havoc. The idea of mulching is to prevent thawing, to keep the ground around the roots frozen. It isn't the freezing that does the damage; it's the alternate freezing and thawing. If your mulch is too thin, or has blown away, replace it before a thaw comes along. Use clean straw, leaves, or marsh hay; the latter will be the best if you can secure it, as it has no seed to scatter.

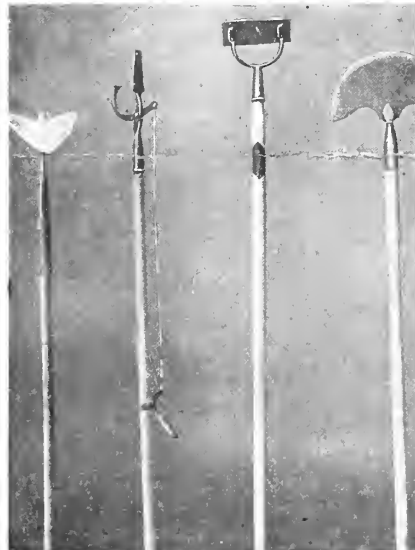
Every good lawn should have a few evergreens. A foundation planting of evergreens, provided they are correctly placed, will be most attractive. Most evergreen foundation plantings are not done with an eye to the future. Tall growing sorts are placed in front of verandas or windows where they eventually cut off the view and light; frequently they are too close together and are soon crowding one another. Plantings should be judged from the standpoint of the future; few care to have to change their plantings every four or five years. Insist that your nurseryman work from this viewpoint, rather than from the one of selling you as much stuff as possible.

### BUSY MAN'S PRUNING OUTLINE

*Purposes.* (a) To rejuvenate the plant; (b) to maintain a desired size or form.

*Nature of Pruning.* (a) Removing injured, dead or diseased branches; (b) removing branches which conflict, cross or rub; (c) thin out to admit air or sunlight; (d) cut out sprouts or suckers which shoot from the ground.

*Pruning Periods.* Prune spring flowering shrubs immediately after the flowers fall. Prune summer or fall blooming shrubs during late winter, before the flower buds have formed. If a restricted or compact growth on evergreens is desired, prune during June, just after the plants start into growth.



Some of the Tools Needed for Good Gardening

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Point Hoe   | 3. Scuffle Hoe |
| 2. Lawn Weeder | 4. Edger       |

Ask your hardware dealer



The Pride of Mrs. Stuhlsatz, Oskaloosa, Iowa.  
The home environment radiates happiness

*Specific Information.* In this outline no attempt has been made to cover any specific cases which may require special treatment. Where such cases exist we shall be glad to furnish special instructions.

### WE NEED GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHS

For catalogue purposes we can always obtain photographs from professional or commercial collections. While such photographs are usually satisfactory, we would like very much to have a collection showing Farr plants in perhaps "faraway places." The following offer and conditions may interest you:

1. We offer one plant, your choice, from the Masterpiece Collection of Irises, for any hardy plant photographs sent us. Your choice of Seminole, Cecile Minturn, Japanesque, or Sea Gull.

2. One iris is the prize for from one to five photographs. If five or more desirable pictures are received from one person, another selection may be made from the Masterpiece Collection.

3. The photographs sent us are to be and remain our property. It is understood that we may reproduce them in our catalogues and in BETTER PLANTS.

4. Mail photographs to us in envelopes or rolls, protected with cardboard. Place your name, address and any information concerning the subject illustrated, on the back of each photograph. Enclose a letter stating which iris we shall send to you and when.

5. Holland bulb illustrations are particularly desirable for the 1924 bulb catalogue.

### THE GREAT STONE FACE

The impressive "Stone Face" (pictured on the address section) is located in Keweenaw County, Michigan. The photo was contributed by Alma Schlichting, Lake Linden, Michigan, a reader of the article "The Great Stone Face in the Garden" which appeared in the October, 1923, issue of BETTER PLANTS.

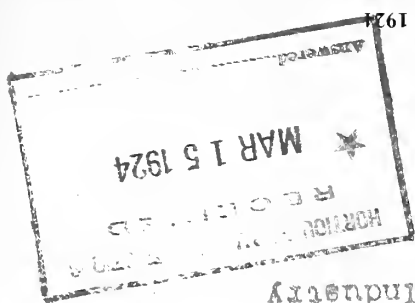
### TULIP HAPPINESS IN 1923

A few years ago I ordered a \$5 collection of tulips, your selection, and they have been a joy to me every spring, and much admired by passers-by.

The tulips I now have are Dream, Baron de la Tonnaye, Clara Butt, Gretchen, and Sultan, and I would like a blend of colors different from these.

So many have asked where my tulips were obtained that I have taken pleasure in passing the word along.

PHEBE V. S. CRARY, Boone, Iowa.



U S Dept of Agriculture  
Bureau of Plant Industry  
220-14th St S W  
Washington D C

Return Postage Co., Wyomissing, Pa.  
Farr Nurseries

A Matter of to the Hardy Garden

BETTER PLANTS—FEBRUARY-MARCH, 1924

The Great Stone Face  
(See page 3)



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## BETTER PLANTS

### Colonial Perennial Collection 35 Plants for \$5

An average price of less than 15 cts. each. Consisting of old time favorites. Two collections for \$9.

- 5 *Achillea*, Cerise Queen
- 5 *Coreopsis lanceolata*
- 5 *Gaillardia grandiflora*
- 5 *Heliopsis pitcheriana*
- 5 *Veronica spicata*
- 5 *Anthemis tinctoria* Kelwayi
- 5 *Lychnis viscaria splendens*

If you have an old perennial garden to replenish or a new one to start, here is an economical opportunity.

### Superb Perennial Collection 30 Plants for \$5

An average price of 17 cts. per plant. Consisting of more recent specialties. Two collections for \$9.

- 5 *Anemone*, Coupe d'Argent
- 5 *Delphiniums*, Farr Hybrids
- 5 *Aquilegia*, Farr Hybrids
- 5 *Hemerocallis* kwanso flore-pleno
- 5 *Centaurea macrocephala*
- 5 *Artemisia lactiflora*

### Colonial and Superb Collections Together for \$9

#### Niagara Hand-Dust Gun

The Niagara Hand-Dust Gun is a "machine gun" for plant enemies. Three to six times as fast as spraying. More economical in use and result.



For all garden vines, shrubbery and perennials. Price \$3.50, including 1 pound of All-In-One Dust and a copy of "Instructions for Exterminating Garden Pests," a 40-page book.

All-In-One Dust is effective for scales, sucking insects, mildew, blight and chewing insects.

Sounds like a "cure all" but money back if unsatisfactory at any time.



#### FARR BETTER LABELS

are made of aluminum, with the name of the plant permanently stamped on the label. The rod is Number 9 gauge galvanized wire. The little "kink" in the rod prevents turning when pushed in the soil. The upper portion of the rod is bent at an angle of about 45 degrees, thus permitting the label to be easily read. These labels will give a correct check on varieties and



help you to keep accurate garden records.

**Small labels**, two inches wide, with wire standard 1 foot long

	Each
Less than 5 labels . . . . .	\$0 30
5 to 24 labels . . . . .	25
25 to 99 labels . . . . .	20
100 labels or more . . . . .	18

**Medium sized labels**, two inches wide, with 2-foot wire standard

	Each
Less than 5 labels . . . . .	\$0 35
5 to 24 labels . . . . .	30
25 to 99 labels . . . . .	25
100 labels or more . . . . .	22

These prices include proper stamping of variety name. Send us the names of your garden pets—we can make up the labels quickly and forward them so that they will be ready in advance of the blooming season.

### MASTERPIECE COLLECTION FARR'S NEW IRISES

When you know Irises as "June companions" they reveal their delicate, ethereal loveliness, and lead you into a wonderland of delight. Wouldn't you like to adopt them as a "hobby," just as I did many years ago?

	Each
<i>Cecile Minturn</i> . . . . .	\$5 00
<i>Sea Gull</i> . . . . .	3 00
<i>Seminole</i> . . . . .	2 50
<i>Japanesque</i> . . . . .	3 00

Complete set (amounting to \$13.50)  
for \$12.00

### FOUR MASTERPIECES DESCRIBED

*Cecile Minturn*. Standards and falls a uniform shade of cattleya-rose; light beard. A large dome-shaped flower and a distinct improvement in the pink Irises. Height 2 feet. \$5.00 each.

*Sea Gull*. Standards white, dome-shaped; falls white faintly shaded blue and netted with narrow blue lines or veins. A large and unusual flower which is appropriately named. Height 2 feet. \$3.00 each.

*Seminole*. One of the richest colored varieties. Standards soft violet-rose; falls rich velvety crimson; brilliant orange beard. Blooms exceptionally large, dome-shaped; equally effective variety for specimen or mass planting because of its free-blooming character; medium height and strong grower. Honorable mention by the American Iris Society, June, 1920, and rates 8.3. \$2.50 each.

*Japanesque*. A distinct departure from the German type. Six petals spread horizontally in the form of a Japanese Iris, giving the flower the effect of having six falls without standards. The standards are lavender-white flecked lilac; falls deep violet edged with pale lavender; coppery yellow beard. In many blooms the standards are marked like the falls. \$3.00 each.

**Bertrand H. Farr—Wyomissing Nurseries Company**  
1250 Garfield Avenue, Wyomissing, Penna.